Lt-Col Ramsey McDonald

Westridge Farm
Streatley Berks

Thursday. Nov 22 34.

Dearest Rene

It was lovely getting your good letter it was ~~a~~ somehow an awfully good letter — had a bit of a misery stoutly borne feeling in it. I am so sorry you've had the bloody 'flu so early in the winter — & poor Joan & all — I do wish you could get a heat into your house it would be so much nicer for you — these artillery blokes here are nice & snug with central heating — it's a nice ~~house~~ farmhouse & the country near lovely — real chalk down neolithic scrub country just above — 'spect the population is 90% Celtic too. if one went into the matter. It's much the most remote-feeling place I've been in for a long time & so near London — I went out for a walk this afternoon with L.B — he is most awfully nice — I never like to talk to him a lot about the graphics but you know how different it is in talk to great men of the decade ~~[illegible]~~ just past — you get curious shy & feel an awful little impostor & never quite know why — I wish you were here — I've found two illustrations by old Solly in a book here. One for the Ancient Mariner & another called in real Solly language "Sidonia & Otto von Bork on the Waterway to Stettin ~~*~~ — a pen drawing by Reginald Savage." — they are in a thing called The Pageant 1896.* — Sturge-Moore. Ricketts Shannon — Rossetti, Whistler, Burne Jones — poems of Paul Verlaine & a ~~[illegible]~~ Story by John Gray called 'Niggard Truth' which opens authentically "Harriet came of farmers. The stout race hesitated & hoped in the strong girl; at last, for she never had any children, finished with her. Her mother had followed Whitfield, and Harriet held to the new Protestantism; the men, decidedly retrograde here, were all for Pope Denys. At the time when Harriet first had a real existence, Symbolism might have called the grand-dad Silenus, the father Gambrinus, the brother Dionysos. They drank and drank; oftenest in their own complete & scandalous company; but at all times they drank. Their cult brought her a new, at times harassing, duty: to see them laid out all three at night in the warm Kitchen, their cravats loosened, and the fire safe extinguished." & so on — it's already getting toward 'Park' & the ways we know — isn't it — the careful punctuation & slight 'specialness' — I can almost hear his Nobis quoque peccatoribus & the throat clearing — I suppose there would

* I was a year old then — raising hell at Brockley I suppose. It appals me to think that my dear mother has lived at B. ever since then — the Boer War — The G. War — all the rest — cooking — mending — nursing every day without rest. almost — it's terrific.

never be any interest in his collected
works? — no I think not — it
would be nice to have them. His house
has been lousy with Anglican priests — uncles
of Nicky — nice blokes. — one
of them had been on the canal bank at
Wipers when I was there because he came
to see the colonel of my battalion — a pal
of his — may have stepped off the bloody
duck board to let him pass for all I know.
He reminded me that we used to call
Festubert, Festering Hubert — which I had
forgotten — pretty nice I think. (N.B. for
incorporation or inversion). Nicky & Basil
& Helen B. came for the week end & were
all nice — I went to Mass with Nicky
in a nice snug church with a stove.
— yes I told you over the 'phone about
old Coles preaching about the leaven etc.
Nicky had a nice little fur coat & looked
sweet. nice dear girl. There is a tiny
puppy here that is a bugger for
slippers & carpets & is carrying havoc
through the house — also a wild ~~cat~~
kitten that has already caught & killed
a rat as large as itself. — I think
it's a British wild cat alright. — It got
at the puppy — ~~but~~ just as I was watching

for the window someone rushed out & pasted them.
The puppy is a bloody jock.

I'm going to Penelope's on Saturday the
address is Garrards Farm, Uffington Berks.
'Phone Uffington 46. — Penelope is coming for
me on Saturday morning. I hope I like
being there — it's right against the White
Horse where Alfred bollocked up the
black heathen men. — that old G.K.
carried on about — I always wanted to
see the White Horse Vale. Did you see
the article in Blackfriars by Saunders Lewis
about Catholics in Wales.

I met Donald in the Commercial the other day
with ~~the~~ two women ~~one~~ who seemed
Catholic workers of some sort it was nice
seeing him — I thought he seemed
more cheerful than he used to be —
he seemed to be working pretty hard
I also went to see David Mathew to
fling some Welsh stuff — he asked
about you & wanted to ~~know~~ what you
thought of the Laxton do — I told him
he roared with laughter — his fat sides
shaking —

Poor Joan I do hope she is getting
teeth now — how absolutely ghastly
to have six teeth out at once

did she say Damn & blast this great big
Knashing bounder of a tooth..

I suppose Eric is still with the
North Welshmen – if it's at all clear he
will see Snowdon and the fastnesses
of Gwynedd – but I believe all that
North Welsh coast is now intolerable
tourist anglicized & villa'd – I liked
your 'wide colleges' – because Bangor in
Welsh means college – in Irish too, I
believe. Sup. is shortly coming up
so I must just wash & straighten
my tie. I like abt Joan's tune.

"Well now you might take your pencil
& make a careful loving study – ~~[illegible]~~
you will do well to notice the delicate
contours – you cant steal a march on
nature – some of you students think you
can invent & invent without going to
the fountain head – mother nature – I
strongly advise you. to spend some hours
each evening of careful observation –
~~[illegible]~~ the great Ruskin as you
may know, made the most careful drawings,
& Mr Savage: went even further: the point
of his pencil conveys the utmost veracity –

[woffing without]

Sup. its finished – old B making

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great points over his graphics in the opposite chair: — wouldn't he think this awful balls if he read it — I expect it is but it amuses us in a hard world. Mère most awfully kind to me & it's ~~nise~~ nice & peaceful — It was lovely seeing Prudence — she talked about you both a lot. She had an awful time with her poor knee & ankle in bloody austria. — the doctors were marvellous & skillful but don't give a bugger how much they hurt — the bastards. Well dear René I must go to bed — I feel not so bad but not to say prime — feel I'm not making much headway — alright as long as I do nothing & think of nothing & nothing happens. Lord I emerge some day God I do wish I could get sanity done. — Ah Well — well anyway God bless you & Joan lots of love to you both — Bon sends all my love to my dear Petra

David.

Did you say you were having a new stove — where is it to be?

Hule points only just going down over Joan not unity for my birthday — I looked at Basil: point & laughed like anything & then had to make a joke to explain it. — I mean, my laughter.